10: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1945 AP1/Burma
Karen AP7

feel safer there than with any other people in the country. 152
When Karens are convinced of one's honesty and truth- [672]
fulness and genuine friendliness they will prove themselves
to be true friends and they will inconvenience themselves
no end to make that friendship good.

In common with some of the other Hill peoples of 633
south-eastern Asia, they have a great love for music.
Their own native music is built on the pantonic scale.
It consists of weird tunes in a minor key that are plain-
tive, sad and tremulous. They use the harp, and make 634
crude instruments resembling the violin out of bamboo,
and a kind of xylophone played with two small mallets.
The drum is also used in various forms.

The educated Karens, most of whom are Christians, 633
have almost entirely abandoned their old plaintive native 177
airs for the happier Western music. It began with the
hymns of the Christian Church of which a fine and large
collection has been translated into both the Sgaw and Pwo
languages, and which they delight to sing. In addition to
these, the young people love picking up the popular airs
sung in musicales and in the cinemas. It is not uncommon
to hear these songs even in remote villages.

During the past quarter century there has grown up
a new music among the people, mostly among the
Christians. Every Christian village has its choir. They
love to sing together. The leaders of these choirs have
taken Western airs and have combined them with touches
of their native music and composed new songs for them.
Hundreds of these have been published by mimeograph
and a few of them have shown real musical ability on the
part of their composers. The Karens have, as a rule, soft
and velvety voices that lend themselves to good music.

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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A Shaw Karen Youth with His Harp
In the olden days every youth loved his harp and carried it with him constantly. On such instruments as these they played the accompaniments to their old epic "htas," which have been preserved for generations. The boar's tusk comb hangs down behind this boy's ear.

(Pp. i- iii are blank)

19: Marshall M-6 (ca. 1910) 1922 APT Burma
Karen APT

speech. Dr. D. C. Gilmore believes that the Pwo dialect branched off from the parent stem earlier than the Sgaw, but kept the original nasals and, being in closer contact with outside races, adopted more outside words.[9] The Sgaw has dropped the final nasals, because they were more difficult to pronounce, but has kept the original form of the language to a greater extent than the Pwo.

The fact that the Karen have used bronze drums for many generations has, I think, a bearing on their racial relationship. These remarkable drums have only recently been studied by Western scholars, and their full significance is still a matter for investigation. These drums were formerly thought to be of Chinese origin, but it seems that they are to be attributed to aboriginal tribes, found in what is now Tong King and Yunnan by the Chinese generals, Ma Yuon (41, A.D.) and Chu-Ko Liang (230, A.D.), who conquered these territories for the Chinese.[10]

The upper portion of Camboja is now considered to be the original home of these druma. They formed part of the possessions of the chiefs and were considered very precious, each being worth from eight to ten oxen. Chu-ko Liang is reported to have exacted sixty-three bronze drums as tribute from the barbarians and to have taken them back with him. Among the peoples of Burma the Karen seem to be the only race that has made use of these drums. They do not manufacture them, but buy them from the more industrious Shans, who do not appear to set much store by them.[11] Among the Karen, until recent times, the owner of one of these instruments was considered of more worth than a man who had seven elephants. A drum often formed the ransom of a village or the dowry of a maiden. Although so valued a possession often belongs to a chief, it may belong to any one who can purchase it.

It may have been from the Karen that the Chinese generals exacted part or all of their tribute. If so, this people was living in the mountains of Yunnan at the beginning of the Christian era.

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[9] D. C. Gilmore, "Phonetic Changes in the Karen Languages" in *Journal, Burma Research Society*, Vol. VIII, Pt. ii, pp. 122, ff.

[10] Several pamphlets and articles in anthropological journals deal with these drums. The most extensive work on the subject, which is in German, is by Franz Heger and is entitled *Alte Metalltrommeln aus Sudost-Asien*, Leipzig 1902. An excellent short work entitled "Anciens Tambours de Bronze," is by H. Parmentier and is printed in the *Bulletin l'Ecole d' Extreme-Orient*, Hanoi, 118. See also Chapter XIII on Bronze Drums, pp. 118-130.

[11] W. W. Cochrane, in *The Shans*, mentions the Shan towns of Tagaung or Ta Kaung and Magaung or Mong-Kawg as denoting, respectively, Drum Ferry and Drum Town, and on page 62 he says: "They took also a palace drum, whose reverberations could call the people together, dissect enemies, or bring rain in time of drought." He makes no further reference to their use.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

173 It is a belief of the Karen that their forefathers have cherished these
534 drums from time immemorial. One drum in Toungoo district is, I have been told, supposed to be a thousand years old. Our knowledge of them is, however, too meagre to permit any dogmatic statements on the subject. Further investigation should throw more light upon it.

171 The religious traditions of the Karen have also been thought
173 to possess significance in regard to their racial origin. When, in 1827, the early missionaries first discovered the Karen, they were surprised to find that these people professed having received from their forefathers monotheistic traditions in which the story of the creation was almost parallel to the Mosaic account in Genesis. (See p. 211.) The question, "Whence this story?" at once suggested itself. Was it their independent possession from the beginning of time, their only relic from a more vigorous and highly civilized past when, as they explained, they had not yet lost their book?[12] Or had it been borrowed from another people, whom they had met in the course of their wanderings from their northern birthplace to their present home? Some of the early missionaries, including Dr. Mason, thought that the Karen might be found to be the lost tribes of Israel [13] or, if not actually descended from Abraham, that they had received instruction from colonies of Jews, who were supposed to have spread to the East in ancient times.

It has also been suggested that Christian missionaries, traveling to the Orient during the early centuries of our era, transmitted this creation story to the Karen. On this point the comment of Dr. Laufer is pertinent.[14] He says: "The 'River of running sand' in the traditions of the Karen is not necessarily to be interpreted as the Desert of Gobi; at least it is not convincing. Still less is it conceivable that their legends should suggest an acquaintance with the Jewish colonies in China, or even with the Nestorian tablet at Sian-fu."

[12] The tradition of the Lost Book is not peculiar to the Karen, but seems to be found also among other tribes in and about Burma, *e. g.*, the Kaws, Was, Palaungs, and the Hkamoks of Siam: letter of Mr. Taw Sein Ko to Thra Ba Te, dated 10th Oct., 1917.

[13] In a letter to the Baptist Missionary Society, dated Oct., 1832, Dr. Mason mentions hearing of the shipwreck on the Tenasserim River some decades before of a foreign merchant who told the Karen that other white men would come and teach them about God. He adds that he thought that the traditions came from Portuguese priests who had earlier come to the East. But in a later letter, dated Oct., 1834, Dr. Mason writes that he had come to believe that the traditions were indigenous with the Karen, whom he thought to be the lost Hebrew tribes. He wrote a communication to the Government to that effect from the "Headquarters of the Tenasserim," dated Dec. 6, 1833. (See *Missionary Magazine*, Dec., 1833, p. 469, and Oct. 1834, p. 382).

[14] See *Journal, American Folklore*, Vol. XXXI, No. CXX, pp. 382, f. for his review of Sir J. G. Scott's Indo-Chinese Mythology, in *Mythology of All Races*, Vol. XII.

[1] [i.e. Bronze drums, see p. 9, cat. 116 -- Analyst.]

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1923 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

CHAPTER XIII

BRONZE DRUMS

Early travelers noticed the presence of large bronze drums in the Karen houses in Karenni and in the Toungoo Hills; but it is only recently that these drums have been made the subject of careful study. In the latter part of the nineteenth century Europeans first began to examine similar objects that were brought from China. It has been discovered that these objects are scattered through a vast area extending from Mongolia on the north to the Celebes Islands on the south, but that their place of origin was probably in the old Cambodian kingdom of the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Four or five classes of such drums are distinguished, of which the Karen drums form one group.[1]

The Karen drums are characterized by a nearly straight cylinder or body, which has a slightly narrowed waist. The cylinder is encircled by bands of conventionalized designs between sets of straight lines forming the borders of the bands. In some cases there is a line of molded figures of elephants and snails down one side of the cylinder. The flat circular metal head extends a little beyond the body, forming a rim. In the center of the head is a large star enclosed by concentric circles between which are narrower or wider zones filled with figures of different patterns. Distributed at equal intervals around the outer edge of the head are four or six frogs in relief. Sometimes these frogs are in sets of two, one on top of the other; sometimes in sets of three, superimposed one upon another. The two pairs of small handles are situated on opposite sides of the body of the drum well toward the top, and present the appearance of neatly braided straps. These bronze drums vary in size from about eighteen inches across the head to about thirty inches.

[1] In addition to the authorities mentioned at the foot of page 9, Chapter II, the article by W. Foy, entitled "Über Alte Bronzetrommeln aus Sudost Asien" in the *Mitteilungen der Anthropologischen Gesellschaft in Wein*, Vol. XXXIII, (1903) is a valuable contribution to the general subject of bronze drums. Herr Foy, however, differs somewhat in classification from Franz Heger, who is followed by M. Parmentier. Origin, shape, and ornamentation form the basis for the differentiation into classes. Heger puts the Karen drums in Type III, while Foy distinguishes them as Type V.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 538 [782] 435 Concerning their origin much that is legendary has been written. In the *Karen Thesaurus* we are told in substance that these drums ("klo oh tra oh") are very expensive and are owned in Lower Burma by a few very wealthy persons, who make offerings of food and liquor to them annually, fearing an early death if they fail to do this. The drums are said by some to have been brought from the "K' wa" country and by others from the "Swa" tribe.[2] Those who went to buy these objects paid according to the number of frogs on them, the price of one with two frogs being twenty rupees. The buyer put down the price and took away the drum, after which the owner came and got his money. If the buyer did not leave the money, he risked losing his way and being overtaken and eaten by the owner. The drums are used in making a noise like that of a gong.[3]

534 435 556 Dr. Francis Mason, writing at Toungoo in 1868, speaks of these drums under the name of "kyee-zees," and is better informed than the writer in the *Thesaurus* in saying that they are obtained from the Shan. He also states that the Karen distinguish ten different kinds of drums according to sound and have a different name for each kind. Dr. Mason tells us that the best-sounding drums are worth a thousand rupees apiece, while the poorest bring only one hundred each. Dr. Mason continues: "The possession of Kyee-zees is what constitutes a rich Karen. No one is considered rich without one, whatever may be his other possessions. Everyone who has money endeavors to turn it into Kyee-zees, and a village that has many of them is the envy of the other villages and it is often the cause of wars to obtain possession of them." [4]

534 [773] Some of the Karens have told me that in the beginning these drums were obtained from the "Yu" people, who seem to have been the Jung or Yung who occupied Yunnan in ancient times.[5] Indeed, various indications point to the probability that the drums existed or were in use in Yunnan when the ancestors of the Karen passed through there from their home in western China into Burma,

[538 648] [2] The Swa are mentioned in some of the old Karen tales and appear to have been wild cannibals, of whom but little was known. Their location seems uncertain. Some of the tales place them beyond the great waters, while others suggest that they live to the north. Probably the references are to the Waer, who are one of the head-hunting tribes still living in the northern Shan States, on the Chinese frontier.

[3] *The Karen Thesaurus*, 1847, Vol. I, pp. 327, ff.

[4] *Journal, Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 1868, Vol. XXXVII, Pt. II, pp. 128, ff.

[5] Mr. Taw Sein Ko, in *Annual Archaeological Report*, Burma, 1917, pp. 22-23. Mr. Po Lin Te writes in the *Rangoon Gazette*, Sept. 27, 1919, that the Yu were the oldest of five families who emigrated from the Sandy River and were, therefore, entitled to use the drums.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

where they settled.[6] This is the view of the origin of the drums held by Heger and others. 534

Certain Karen traditions associate the drums with "Pü Maw Taw," one of the mythical characters of ancient times. This man was at work in his field and, seeing a flock of monkeys emerge from the forest, feigned death. Thereupon, the monkeys sent several of their number back to bring their drums for the proper performance of the funeral rites. Of the three brought, one was silver, one, gold, and the third, white in appearance. The last one fell into a pool of water and was lost. "Pü Maw Taw" suddenly interrupted the funeral ceremonies and the monkeys ran away, leaving the other two drums in the field. The old man took them home and they at once became the most sacred possession of the people, being consecrated every year with very great ceremony, until at last the Pwo Karen grew tired of making their annual journey for this purpose and carried them off. They were named "Gaw Kwa Htu" and "Gaw Kwa Se" [7] and are still believed to have been deposited in a cave near Donyan in Thaton district. Each drum had two sticks and a striker, all made of bronze. The smaller stick, which produced a rolling sound, was in the form of a centipede. The striker had a quilted surface, in appearance like the scales of a cobra. Unfortunately these drum implements had been left behind with the Sgaw, of Loo Thaw Ko village in the Papun district. Almost every year the Sgaw came down and demanded that the drums be given back to them, but without success. Gaw Le Bay and Gaw Ser Paw were the two Pwo Karens who committed the sacrilege of stealing away the drums, being punished for it with sore eyes, from which their descendants in Donyin suffer even unto this day. 534 773

All the elders believe that the bronze drums connect the Karen people with a remote past. But few of these objects that are still in existence can be traced back more than a century or two. Nevertheless, I have heard of some that are reputed to be much older, especially one in a Mopgha village, near Toungoo, which is said to date back "nearly a thousand years." This drum has a name, and innumerable offerings have been made to it year after year. 534 173

It was formerly thought that the Red Karen were the only tribe who possessed drums, but it now appears that these instruments were known among all the tribes. In many places, however, they are no longer used. It is in the remoter hill regions, where 534

[6] See Chapter I, pp. 9, 12.

[7] "Gaw" is the prefix used for drums, as "saw" is for men.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 [177] the Karen are less affected by outside influences, that the use of the drums has been the most prolonged.

534 531 There is considerable difference of opinion among the people of the various sections of the country about the classification of the drums. A writer in the *Rangoon Gazette* divides them into two general groups, the older and the later. He regards the older, more melodious, and more highly prized group as comprising those which have four single frogs, snails, or elephants on their heads. He subdivides this group into three divisions, namely, (1) "Klo ka paw," (2) "Klo ma ti," and (3) "Klo gaw ple." The drums in the first of these subdivisions are the oldest and best-sounding. The second general group, comprising the later and poorer drums, may be subdivided, according to this writer, into five classes, which he names as follows: (1) "Raw tear," (2) "Raw la," (3) "Raw ser," (4) "Raw saw," and (5) "Raw boo." These have four sets of double or triple frogs or elephants on their heads. Each class has its characteristic design, for example, ears of paddy supplying the decorative figure on the "Raw boo" and Karen hand-bags that on the "Raw tear." [a]

534 In the Pegu Hills the drums with the single frogs on the head and no figures down the side are known as the "hot" drums, that is, those which are beaten on occasions of death or disaster. The others, with the superimposed frogs and with elephants and snails down the side, are called "cool" drums, these being used on festive occasions. In Toungoo, however, the people do not appear to make the distinction just mentioned, but use both kinds of drums indiscriminately for festive and sad occasions, such as weddings and funerals, respectively.

534 778 782 That the drums are regarded as sacred objects can not be doubted. In the back districts, where the old customs are still perpetuated, offerings are everywhere made to them. I was informed that during the month of March, 1918, a feast was to be held in honor of certain drums in the village of Pyindaing, Tharrawaddy district, and that offerings were to be made to them, the customary period of seven years having elapsed since the last feast and offerings. I held myself in readiness to attend the celebration, but was finally told that the ceremony had been postponed indefinitely. The account in the *Karen Thesaurus* speaks of the offerings as having

[a] Mr. Po Lin Te in the *Rangoon Gazette* of Sept. 27, 1919. I regret that this writer's article appeared after I had left Burma on my furlough. I have not been able, therefore, to identify the designs mentioned by him on any picture or sketch of the few I have with me or that are accessible to me.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

been presented annually. Other sources of information indicate that they might be made at any time, especially on occasions of ca-

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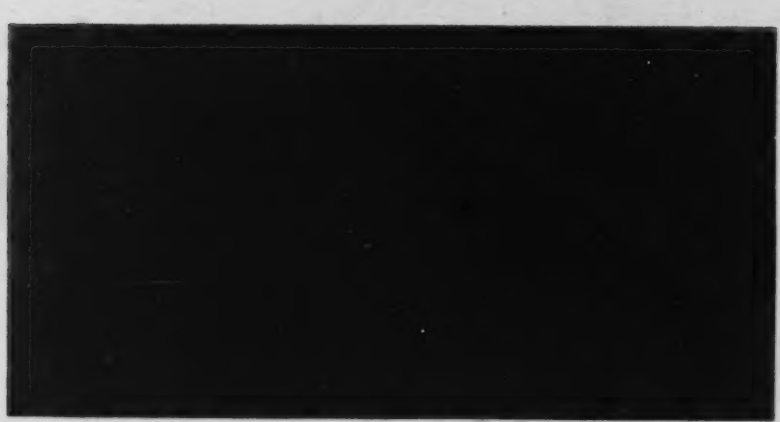
KAREN BRONZE DRUM, NABAAIN VILLAGE, THAREAWADDY DISTRICT
A drum of almost black metal, used for weddings and other festal occasions.

[534]



A "RUBBING" SHOWING THE PATTERN OF THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

lamity or epidemic. As far as I am able to ascertain, these offerings usually consist of food and liquor. In the early times, at least,

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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to withhold such oblations from a drum was to invite the descent of illness and misfortune upon the owner.

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Of the various drums which I have had an opportunity to inspect, I wish to describe two with some fullness, one of these being a "hot" drum and the other a "cool" one. The latter is shown on page 119, and was obtained in 1918 from the Nabaain village tract by Thra Shwe Thee. It is a fine specimen of its class and was used on festive occasions. Its head is twenty-one inches in diameter; its bottom or mouth, sixteen and one-half inches in diameter; its cylinder, fifteen and one-half inches long. The surface of the metal, which is black, is much worn. It has four sets of frogs on the head, each group being composed of three of the creatures, one above another. The frogs are flat and conventional in form. In the center of the head is a large twelve-pointed star, the angles close in between the rays being connected by several arcs, from the outermost of which radiating lines diverge. The points of the star are encircled by nineteen zones, which fill the space to the edge of the rim. These zones are not separated from one another by equal spaces, but fall into five groups. Counting from the center outward, the first three of these groups comprise four zones each, each group being separated from the next one by four concentric circles, while each individual zone is separated from its fellow by three circles in close proximity to one another. The fourth and fifth groups consist of three zones each, four circles separating the two groups and three circles, each zone from its neighbor. The rim zone, on which the sets of frogs stand, is broader than the others, and the edge of the rim is finished with a braided beading.

The ornamental designs contained in the several zones, group by group, are indicated in the following table:

ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS IN THE ZONES ON THE HEAD OF THE NABAAIN DRUM

Group I	*Group II*	*Group III*	*Group IV*	*Group V*
Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching	Hatching
Circles	Circles	Circles	Plaiting	Plaiting
Plaiting	Plaiting	Hatching	Birds' heads	Diamonds
Birds' heads	Six diamonds, circles, three birds	Six diamonds, circles, three birds		

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

Little comment is necessary in regard to these zone decorations. In the fourth zone of Group I and the third of Group IV the birds' heads follow in close succession. In the fourth zone of both Group II and Group III three birds are followed by six diamonds or lozenges, each lozenge being separated from its fellow by two circles, while the series is terminated by three circles. The combination of decorative figures is repeated over and over around the zone. The birds are represented side view, standing with their heads extended horizontally as if looking for food. The outer zone, on which the frogs stand, has less ornamentation than the other zones. At intervals groups of six circles, arranged like the sides of a pyramid, appear in this zone, the rest of the space being left vacant.

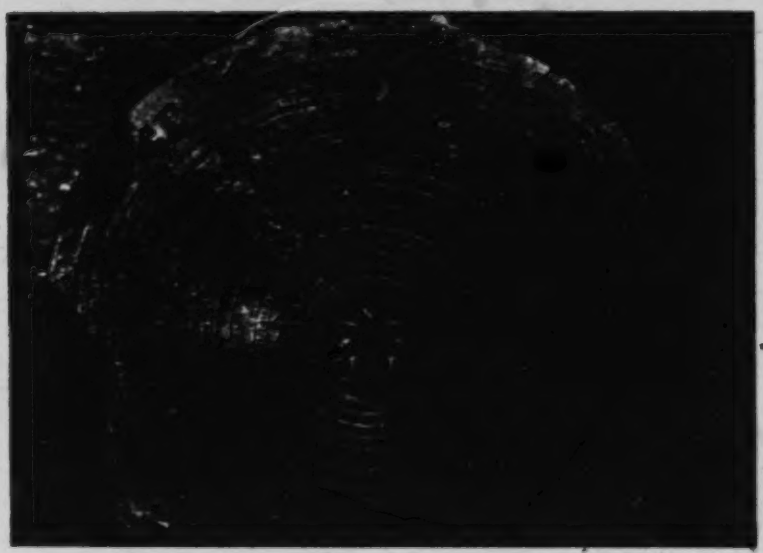
The cylinder of the Nabaain drum is encircled by numerous engraved bands, arranged in three groups. The smallest group, consisting of four bands with indistinct patterns, is at the bottom or open end of the cylinder, the individual bands being separated by close parallel lines which number three in two instances and four in the other. Around the waist of the cylinder run two sets of five bands, a space wider than any of the bands separating the two sets. Parallel lines separate the individual bands from one another. Three bands of the lower set are ornamented with lozenge-shaped figures. The two outer bands of the upper set are filled with hatching and the other three, with the lozenge patterns. Three or four parallel lines separate these bands from each other.

The "hot" or "sad" drum, which I shall next describe, was obtained from the village of Kondagyi at the head of Thonze Creek in the Tharrawaddy district. It has a bronze color and is reputed to contain gold and silver in the alloy. As drums of the class to which this one belongs were used only on occasions of calamity or death in the owner's family, they were kept hidden away in the jungle and were brought out only when necessary. The patterns on the Kondagyi drum are much worn, and part of one side of it is broken off. It was also once somewhat injured at a funeral feast, where a dispute arose about the tonal qualities of this and other drums whose owners were present. Many of the guests regarded the tones of the Kondagyi drum as more melodious than those of the other drums. The partisans of the latter resented this adverse opinion of their favorite instrument with such vigor that they left three knife-cuts on the edge of the sweet-sounding drum before it was rescued by its owner and his friends. The Kondagyi drum

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534

BROKEN DRUM FROM KOUBAGYI, AT HEAD OF TROUKEE CREEK, THAMBAWADDY DISTRICT. USED AT FUNERALS



HEAD OF THE KOUBAGYI DRUM

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

is said to have come into possession of the family from whom I purchased it in 1917, back in 1757, at the time when the Burmese overthrew the Talain kingdom of Pegu. It was supposed to have come originally from "the Eastern country," that is, probably Papun or some locality near the Shan States. A few years ago, when the funeral customs were beginning to fall into disuse, the owner refused three hundred rupees for this drum. Later, realizing that the old usages were gone, he hobbled over the hills to the house of his son, who knew the place of concealment of the drum in the jungle, ordered him to bring it forth from its hiding-place, and sold it for fifty rupees, although still fearing that he might be dishonoring his ancestors. (See illustrations, p. 122.)

The ornamentation of this drum is not so well marked as that on the Nabasin instrument. On the head (lower figure, p. 122) the star in the center has six slightly rounded points, which do not extend more than about three-fourths of the distance from the center to the inner circle of the first zone. The total number of zones is fourteen, arranged in four groups of four, three, two, and four zones, respectively. The two inner groups are separated by a single circle and the others, by two closely drawn circles. The patterns in the zones are given in the following table:

ORNAMENTATION IN THE ZONES ON THE HEAD OF THE KONDAGYI DRUM

Group I	*Group II*	*Group III*	*Group IV*
Hatching	Indistinct pattern	Alternating groups of two fishes and three birds	Two rows of oval dots
Hatching	Indistinct pattern	Same as above	Hatching
Hatching	(Both zones are wider than those in Group I)	(Each of these zones are twice the width of those in Group II)	Indistinct
Two rows of oval dots			Two rows of oval dots

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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Two concentric circles enclose the last zone, and beyond these to the edge of the rim is an open space. The four well-molded single frogs are in the last zone and face to the left, as do the flat patterns also.

The cylinder of this drum is worn and weather-beaten, and the bands in low relief are some of them indistinct. Near the bottom or mouth, which is rounded off with a molding a little thicker than the rest of the metal, there are two indistinct bands, the upper one having been apparently ornamented with hatching. A second group of seven bands encircles the waist of the cylinder. Four of these are below the seam that runs around the drum at its smallest diameter. The lowest of the four seems to have been filled with hatching and the other three, with the lozenge pattern. Of the three bands above the seam two are indistinct, and the third is filled with hatching. Between the bulging shoulder and the rim are four bands with patterns hardly discernible. There is no line of elephants and snails running down the side. Double flat handles of bronze project from opposite sides. These are narrow in the middle and wider at the ends, where they are joined to the cylinder.

Besides the two drums above described, I have seen several others that conform in general to one or the other of the two types to which these belong. I have no data at hand, however, from which to give accurate descriptions of them. On none of them have I seen the figures of men, houses, or boats with which the ancient drums of Cambodia are decorated, but all of them display the characteristics usually attributed to Karen drums, namely, narrow circular zones on the head, containing geometric designs and conventionalized figures of fishes and birds, and the straight cylinder with a slightly narrowed waist.

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Drums are still being made for the Karen by the Shan people at the village of Nwedaung, near Loikaw in Karenni. I have never witnessed the process, but Mr. Franz Heger quotes the following account of it from a letter written in 1884 by Dr. Anderson, of the Calcutta Museum, who acknowledges his indebtedness for his information to a Mr. Lilly, of Rangoon. This information agrees with descriptions given by others who have visited the place: "A clay core is first made of the size of the inside of the gong and on this wax is placed and correctly modeled to the exact shape and covered with appropriate ornamentation. When the wax model is finished, fire-clay and water are dashed on the face of the wax with a

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534

A Bronze Drum Owned by Rev. A. V. B. Crumb, of Toungoo

Head of Mr. Crumb's Drum

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 brush. The clay and water, being thrown with great force, pene-
439 trate into the small hollows and angles of the wax. When a sufficient thickness of clay has been added in this way, a coarse clay is laid on outside to give strength. The wax is then melted out and the mould made nearly red-hot. The metal is then poured in." [9]

Whether the Karen ever cast their own drums is a question not yet settled, and one that will be very difficult to determine. Certain it is that their other possessions are generally rude and lacking in decoration. If they were once able to produce articles of such artistic merit as these drums, they must have been more advanced than we now find them and have lost accomplishments which their ancestors possessed in a more vigorous northern clime, before they migrated to their present abode and became dependent upon their more thrifty neighbors for their present supply.

000 If a more careful study of these drums and their uses, both among the Karen and the other tribes of Indo-China, can be made, it may yet be possible to throw new light on the relation of these peoples and to supply historical data that has been long sought.

[9] Heger, *Alte Metalltrommeln aus Südost-Asien*, 227, ff. The quotation goes on to say that "the frogs on the top of the drums are cast in one piece which, considering the thinness of the metal, is a good example of Karen art." I think the author of this account is mistaken in ascribing the manufacture of these drums to the Karen. It has always been said in recent times that the Shan are the makers of them.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

vented from enjoying a good night's rest by the number of other occupants. My cook prepared my meals at the little fireplace in the middle of the room. The villagers sat about and visited with us. When meal-time came the women and girls brought in their generous supplies of food, consisting of two large trays piled high with snow-white steaming rice, besides smaller trays and bowls filled with several kinds of curry, "ngape" water, and vegetables. The visitors were expected to eat something from every dish. While the meal was in progress the hosts withdrew, except one or two elders, the women returning afterwards to clear away the dishes and uneaten food with the polite remark that their guests had eaten very little. Many shared in receiving us; and we were spared the embarrassment, not to say the danger according to our belief, of violating the tabu that prevented our being entertained at the time by a family in their own quarters.

Besides serving as a guest-chamber, the "blaw" has another important use, namely, as the gathering-place for the young men of the village. When a boy becomes a youth ("hpo tha hkwa taw"), he is expected to spend his leisure time in his parents' room, working and eating with them, as seems to be the custom. When evening comes, he repairs to the "blaw" to be with his fellows and to sleep there. This is a custom that is common among the Kachins of Burma and many other tribes of the Orient. Among the Kachins the "blaw" is a place of license. The Brecs also allow a great deal of liberty to their young people, and evidently advantage of it is taken by them. But among the Sgaw Karens, at any rate, the girls remain with their mothers. There is no common room for the girls, or any place where both youths and maidens may meet for restrained intercourse. No doubt among the Karen the use of the "blaw" as a club-room is for the purpose of keeping the young men together and separating them from the young women, thus preventing offence of the "by na," which would bring a curse upon the soil and damage to the crops.

It has never been possible for parents to prevent all social intercourse between young people of the opposite sexes. In fact, it has hardly ever been attempted. As is shown elsewhere in this volume, there are occasions among the Karen when the sexes mingle, for example, on fishing expeditions and at marriages, funerals, etc. If, however, a youth desires to visit a maiden, etiquette prescribes the way: he must take his harp ("t'na"), appear before her house, and serenade her. Sitting down, he sings to the accom-

(Note Not being allowed in family rooms during the Byha feast -- Analyst)

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Karen AP7

paniment of his instrument. If she replies to his request to be permitted to visit with her, she does so on the jew's-harp ("t'xe"), answering him in verse. He than mounts the ladder and they visit together, either singing over "htas" already familiar to them or, if skilled in improvising, putting their own thoughts into rhyme. If too long an interval should elapse without the sound of either instrument, the elders would very likely put in an appearance to find out the reason.

SLAVERY

Slavery no longer exists among the Karen; but when it did, it was incidental to war. The British acquisition of Lower Burma during the thirty years before 1886 brought with it the cessation of village raids and tribal conflicts in which the captives taken might, and frequently did, become slaves. Such captives were treated according to the changing whims of their masters. When first brought in they might be harangued by the leader of the victorious war-band, in case he chose to denounce them for starting the war and to recount all the alleged or real wrongs they and their people had inflicted upon him and his village. The proof of their guilt lay in their capture. While being kept in captivity they were subject to rough treatment, such as beating and wounds, which might be preliminary to their being killed. If they were spared and not redeemed within a short time, they were either kept as slaves or sold to traders, who might be other Karens or Shans. Old people were not marketable, and it was difficult to find buyers for them at any price. Men and women in the prime of life, that is, between the ages of thirty and forty years, brought about one hundred rupees each; young men and maidens, approximately three hundred rupees each, and boys and girls from twelve to fifteen years, who were considered the most valuable, sold for four hundred rupees each. Such prices did not always prevail, for Mr. Mason in 1868 reported that once, when he was in Karenni, he saw two Shan women brought in and sold at fourteen rupees apiece.

While slavery was a recognized institution among the Karen, it does not seem to have become a rigid system.[6] When the captives were redeemed, they returned to their previous status of

[6] This mild form of slavery, which we find previously existing among the Karen, seems rather general among some of the other peoples in the neighboring regions, as in Borneo: see Hose and MacDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. I, 71, 81, and Cole, *Wild Tribes of the Davao District of the Philippine Islands*, 96, 102.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

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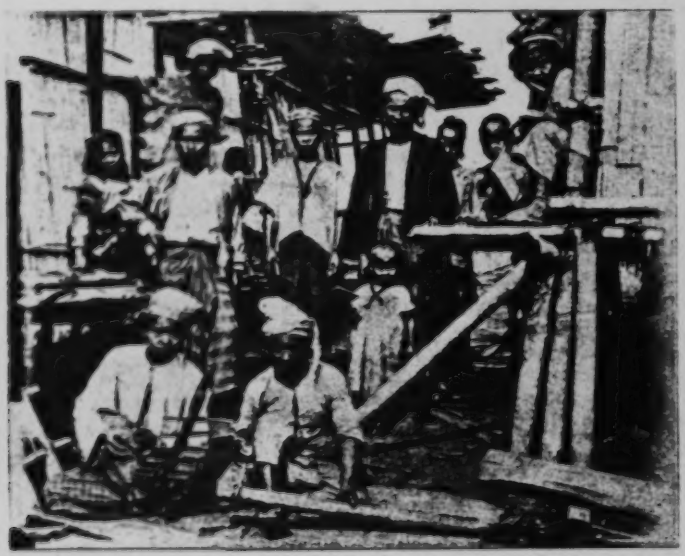
the bare feet of the enemy who was careless enough to run into them.

In the early times the participants in a foray equipped themselves with armor and shields, although such protective contrivances are almost unknown at the present time. The armor was a sort of jacket of thick hides thought to be serviceable in warding off the strokes and thrusts of sword and spear. The name by which it was known was "t' xo." Shields, called "k' taw," were constructed of wood and covered with a tough skin. I have not been able to learn from any one what was their shape or just how they were made. However, Mr. F. H. Gates, the political officer of Karenni, gives us this bit of information on the subject: "A generation or two back these people carried a shield made of plank covered with buffalo hide and studded with brass nails." He adds that no specimens of these shields are to be obtained now.[5]

[5] *Report* of 1894-95, p. 22.

534



A Shaw Karen Orchestra, Thaungwaddy Hills
The harp and the guitar are being played together.

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CHAPTER XVII

MUSIC, MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS, AND DANCING

KAREN MUSIC

The Karen use the pentatonic or five-toned scale, which has belonged to the Eastern nations since early times. This scale consists of the first, second, third, fifth, and sixth intervals of the modern octave. They appear to know nothing of different musical keys, but in starting a tune try one pitch or another until they have found the range suitable to their voices. They do not keep accurate time in their singing, but hold one or another tone as suits their fancy, introducing quavers on the long notes and sliding down or slurring from one tone to the next. Some words and phrases they repeat over and over again, thereby suggesting the repetitions in an anthem. As they sing in minor strain, their music has a quality of sadness.

On their instruments they play tunes that are not rendered vocally. This is especially true of the melodies they play on the pipes ("hpi ba"), rather than of set compositions. These pipes are capable of producing really beautiful music, consisting largely of improvised runs and variations, demanding no small skill.[1]

It is to be regretted that, with the acceptance of Christianity, the Karen have almost entirely dropped their own music for that of the West. Hymns particularly appeal to them. Perhaps this is due to their desire to leave their pre-Christian life altogether behind them, as well as to the more animated quality of our Western music. However, a few Karen melodies have been adapted to hymns and have been recently incorporated in their hymnbook through the efforts of the Rev. E. N. Harris, of Toungoo.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

The Karen have seven or eight primitive musical instruments, besides drums, cymbals, and gongs. Those in common use are the

[1] For this note on Karen music and the score of the accompanying "hta" I am indebted to Mrs. U. B. White, of Rangoon.

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Karen AP7

534 harp, the jew's-harp, the bamboo guitar or fiddle, the xylophone, the flute, the graduated-pipes, the gourd bag-pipe, and the wedding-horn. In the olden days every Karen youth possessed a harp ("t'na"), which he carried with him on all occasions. Even at the present time in the villages along the Pegu range one can generally hear these soft-toned instruments. Indeed, in the middle of the night one's sleep may be disturbed by the monotonous strumming on one of them by some wakeful old man, who is trying to beguile the slowly moving hours.

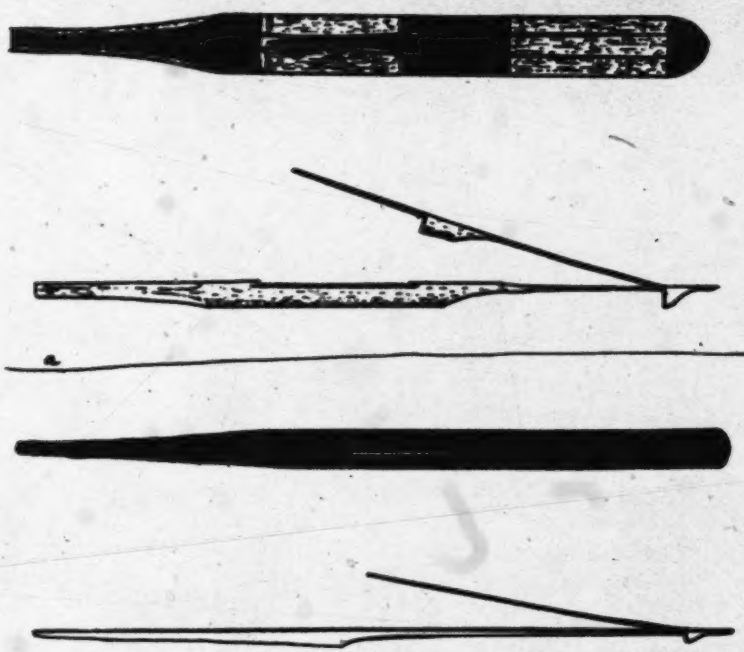
The body of the harp is hollowed out of a block of wood and looks not unlike a miniature dug-out canoe less than two feet long and about five inches in width. A strip of deerskin (of the barking-deer) is stretched across the open top, and lengthwise along the middle of this a piece of wood is fastened to which the strings are attached. The other ends of the strings are fastened to pegs that fit into holes in the arm of the instrument. This arm is curved somewhat like the prow of a boat and is inserted into the sharper end of the body of the instrument. Formerly the strings consisted of cotton fibre, but fine brass wire, bought at the bazaars, is now substituted for the cotton strings. (See frontispiece.)

I have seen a few harps that were made of bamboo, a large section between the nodes being utilized for the body, of which the open side was covered with deerskin extending well down along either edge and fastened with thong-lacing underneath. From one end of this body, and firmly lashed to it, was an arm of wood, the strings being strung from this across to a cleat fastened to the deerskin. This instrument is a very resonant one. In the Pegu Hills the harps have seven strings, the upper one serving only as a stay; but farther north five strings seem to be the rule, all being tuned and played.[2]

The jew's-harp ("t'xe") is usually considered the women's instrument, though there is a short one played by the men. When wooed by the youth with his harp, the maiden replies with her jew's-harp. This instrument consists of a narrow strip of bamboo a foot long and an inch wide at one end, from which it tapers gradually to a point at the other. The tongue is cut in the wider end.

[2] The Burmese harp is similar in form to the first one described above, but has thirteen strings, although the musical scale of both the Burmese and Karen harps comprises only five tones. For an account of Burmese music, see Sir J. G. Scott's *Burma, A Handbook of Practical, Commercial, and Political Information*, 352-357.

end. The specimens I have seen were hardened and blackened over a fire and looked like ebony. Old men have told me that in the days when raids by Burman dacoits were common, the scattered Karen who were hiding in the jungle, fearing lest some of their foes were still in ambush, would signal to one another by playing



KAREN JEW'S-HARPS—(a) Men's jew's-harp. (b) Women's jew's-harp.

certain notes on these jew's-harps. Familiar with the sounds thus produced, which were unintelligible to their enemies, they were able to find one another and come together again.

A very primitive kind of guitar or fiddle ("thaw tu") consists of three strings stretched along one side of a hollow bamboo, which

A KAREN GUITAR

has long longitudinal slits on either side of the strings to emit the sound. This instrument may be played with the fingers like a gui-

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 tar or with a bow, which is nothing more than a smooth strip of bamboo. Nowadays the strings are brass wires fixed in slits at one end and held in place at the other by a cord around the barrel of the instrument. I am told that formerly the strings were made by cutting away the silicious surface of the bamboo and leaving a few fibres, which were then raised above the rest of the stock by running a knife under them and inserting little blocks as bridges at either end to hold the strings taut.

The "paw ku" resembles somewhat the African xylophone and is often made by individuals from green bamboos while stopping to rest by the roadside. After they have played a few strains on it they pass on, leaving it to dry up. It consists of eleven tubes ranging from seven and one-half inches to twenty inches in length and from an inch and a half to six inches in circumference. One end of each tube is cut off square at a node of the bamboo, while the other is sharpened like a quill pen. The distance from the closed end to the shank, where the opening begins, varies from two and one-quarter inches for the tube producing the highest tone to eleven and one-half for that producing the lowest. In addition to this series, there is a base pipe thirteen and three-quarters inches from the node to the shank and thirty-two inches to the point. This one is an octave below the third largest tube of the series and, when played, is struck with another pipe, which is as long as the fifth tube of the instrument. These two are called "klo" (drum) and "klo a deu" (drum enclosure), respectively. The player strikes the tubes of the xylophone with small mallets whittled out of bamboo, while the bass accompaniment is played, usually by a second performer, on the "klo." The tones are not unlike those produced by playing on different sized bottles. (See illustrations on p. 165.)

The "po dwa" is an open bamboo pipe about a cubit in length with three or seven holes down the side, as the case may be. It is not played with the instrument held in the position of the transverse flute or the military fyfe, but in a more or less vertical position like the flageolet, with the notched end of the instrument resting against the chin just below the lips. The player blows over the notch and secures the different tones by opening and closing the holes like a flute-player.

An instrument of graduated pipes, similar to the "Pan's pipes" known among the ancient Greeks, is familiar in the Tenasserim divi-

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Karen AP7

534

PLAYING THE "PAW KU" ON KAREN XYLOPHONE
The man at the right is playing the bass accompaniment on the long tube, while the other strikes the other tubes, which are all laid out in order.

AN EXHIBITION PERFORMANCE ON THE XYLOPHONE
With the tubes spread out in groups of twos and threes, the performer has to exert himself to produce his tunes.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

534 sion. It comprises a number of slender bamboo tubes ranging from a foot or more to three or four feet in length, bound together in a bundle by rattans. "Hpi ba" is the name applied to the instrument by the Karen, who play it with considerable skill and use it frequently. It is said to be of Talain or of Siamese origin.

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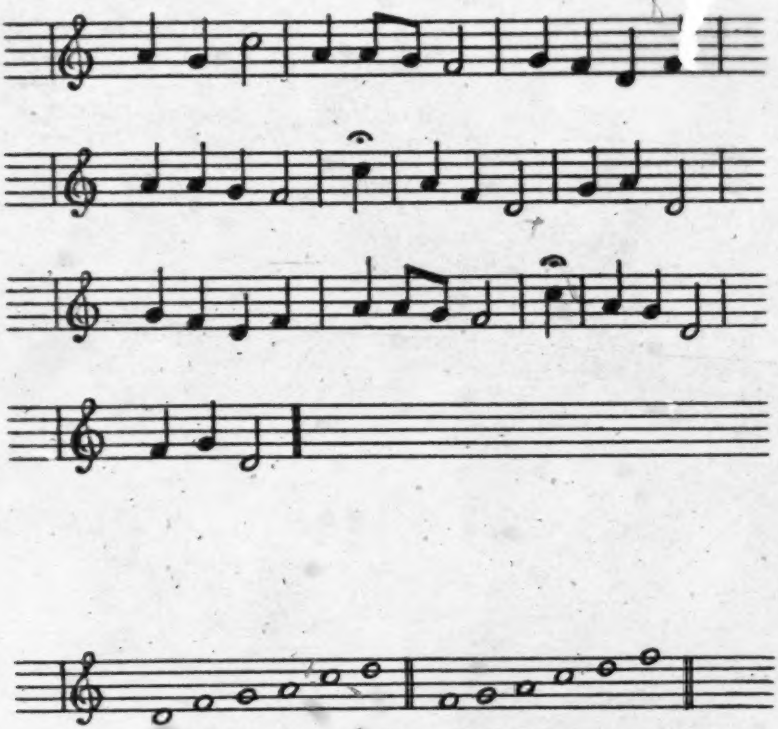

Musical Score of a Karen "Hta" or Poem

The Toungoo Karen, either the Ker-ko or the Padaung, make an instrument, which suggests a bag-pipe, by inserting five bamboo tubes in a gourd. The player blows into the stem of the gourd and fingers the holes in the tubes to produce the different sounds.

[177] * These graduated-pipes exhibit a striking similarity to those found in Malaysia, Borneo, and the Philippine Islands: Skeat and Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, Vol. II, p. 145; Hose and McDougall, *Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, Vol. II, p. 192, and the figure opposite p. 122; Cole, *Bornean Tribes*, p. 118.

Illustrations of musical instruments used by the Bangala and Bajanda tribes of the Congo region, including just such a harp as the Karen have, are given in *George Grenfell and the Congo*, Vol. II, p. 719. An instrument like the graduated-pipes of the Karen is shown in A. W. Nieuwenhuis's *Quer durch Borneo*, Vol. II, p. 142.

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The wedding-horn or "kweh" has but three notes, but should be included in the list of musical instruments. It consists of a foot or more of the smaller end of a buffalo horn, or an elephant's tusk hollowed out and the tip cut off, so that a hole the size of a pencil is left through the truncated tip, and a reed (made nowadays of a piece of tin or brass) is inserted as a mouthpiece, on the concave side of the curve midway between the two ends. The player produces different tones by blowing or inhaling through the reed and by closing or opening the hole in the tip with his thumb. Sometimes these horns are ornamented by encircling the two ends with silver bands. The ivory instrument is thought to be a choicer one than that made of buffalo horn.

Drums, cymbals, and gongs of Burmese manufacture are often found nowadays in Karen villages.

DANCING

535

Dancing of any sort appears to be very little cultivated among the Karen. The practice of walking or parading around the corpse at a funeral can hardly be called dancing, for the participants do not perform any special steps, or move in figures, or observe time and rythm apart from the chanting of their verses. No one has been able to tell me anything about dancing among the Sgaw Karen. Colonel MacMahon has, however, given an account of a ball held in his honor by the Tsaw-ku Karens in the Toungoo Hills. At this dancing party the whole company moved forward, backward, and sideways, swaying their arms up and down, except that they extended them backward when they courtesied. The women wore a special headdress of basket-work, like a brimless hat, which was adorned with beads and the wings of green beetles. This headgear proved to be a novelty, even to the members of other Karen tribes who constituted Colonel MacMahon's retinue.[3]

[3] MacMahon, *The Karens of the Golden Chersonese*, p. 291.

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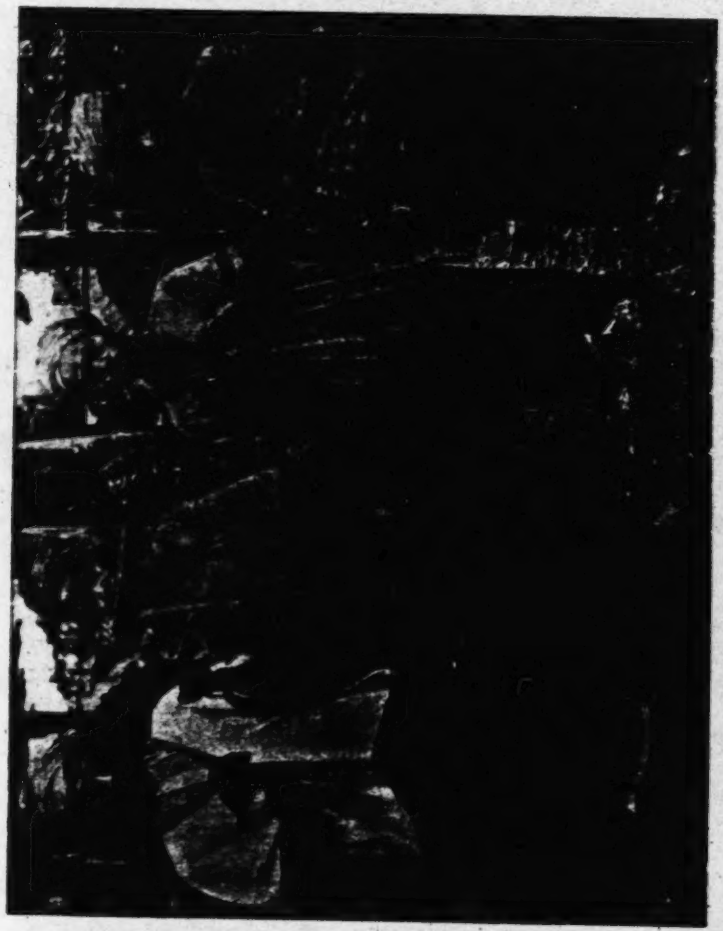
The parents apprehend that he is asking for their daughter. 534
If not ready to give her in marriage, they may answer: 521

"This white pullet we have but raised; [539]
Never once has she cackled."



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THE PARENTS OF THE BRIDEGROOM
Except for the youth with the wedding bark, they are using Burmese instruments on which they are practising preparatory to the wedding ceremony on the morrow.

The hint is sufficient, and the mediator promptly makes his adieu in plainer speech:

"You have not received me. Do not revile me. [539]
The youth's parents will keep their son.

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Karen AP7

no reference to the object of the call. This whole procedure illustrates not only a Karen, but also an Oriental, trait of character. The Oriental deals in indirect methods, rather than run the risk of saying something disagreeable. 584

Realizing that his mission is not in vain, the intermediary enters the house of the prospective bride's parents in joyous mood, fairly shouting the Karen version of "tra-la-la," which is "traw-le, wa-le, ho-o-o." They sit down and discuss the matter. Then the parents kill a fowl or a pig, and the guest stays for dinner in token that the bargain is sealed. After the date for the wedding-feast has been set, the intermediary returns to the young man's family and reports his success. As a rule the time of the feast is fixed by the maiden's parents, but it is sometimes determined by the youth's family.

The only month that is tabu for wedding-feasts is "La plü" (December). This is the month when the moon is most often eclipsed (swallowed by the dogs). To many the month seems as though it were killed and is, therefore, regarded as inauspicious for new life. Others say that it is the month when neither birds nor animals mate, and that it is unwise for men to undertake to start a new household. The favorite months for marriages are March and April in the dry season, because the harvest is past, the weather is good, and there is plenty to eat and drink. The date of the wedding must fall during the waxing of the moon, which augurs an increasing family. This important point being settled, the prospective bride busies herself less with the preparation of her own trousseau than with the weaving of a set of new garments for her future husband, including a white turban, a white blanket with a red stripe running through it lengthwise, and, in the olden days, a "hse plo" or single smock. The maiden's family prepare the rice, fish-paste, pork, and liquor for the feast. The prospective groom has only to make for himself a horn to be blown at the festivities. On the plains and in those places in the hills where each family has its separate house, a booth or "k'la pyeh" is built close at hand for the wedding-feasts.[4] This structure must be so placed as to have its entrance towards the tail of the "p'yo" or great dragon of the Karens. Not long ago I saw such a booth, which was enclosed on three sides and had a small open entrance to the east. The south side was entirely open. Access to the structure was had 585 787 805 292 534 585 343

[4] This booth is often called a "mandat." The name, "k'la pyeh," is from the Burmese. Perhaps the booth itself is of Burmese origin, but I do not know.

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Karen AP7

the string. Hence, offerings of food must be continued to prevent the "k'la" from exercising its enticing power on that of some living relative.

The "k'las" of the children are thought to be especially susceptible to such influence, and among the Bwes extraordinary precautions are taken to protect the children. The Bwe grandmother, who is head of the "Bgha" feast, wraps a pair of fowls in a number of garments, each of her grandchildren supplying one. She then calls back the spirits of the children to prevent them from being attracted by the "Mü xa." After the necks of the fowls have been wrung their flesh is eaten by the family, while the "Mü xa" are supposed to feed upon the essence of the chickens.

The Karen bury their children soon after death, and seem to take no further notice of their passing. When parents have had the misfortune to lose several of their offspring shortly after birth, they believe that the spirits from some vague region have sought mortal birth through their instrumentality, simply to gain the ornaments and trinkets that Karen are in the habit of giving to their children. Having secured these coveted possessions, the spirits return to their former abode with their undeserved rewards. The Karen call this fleeting existence "ta plu aw ka," which means "gaining something by entering life." Parents thus taken advantage of, as they feel, have recourse to a revolting method of terrifying a spirit of this greedy type. After a child has died and been carried to the burial-place, the indignant father thrusts a spear or sword through and through the little body or slashes it with a "dah," that is, a long knife, in the hope that the spirit, seeing how badly its temporary mortal tenement is being treated, may fear to come back again.

Our study of funeral customs among the Karen shows that, in the case of adults at least, funerals are festal and feasting occasions. Much rice and pork curry are consumed and, in the olden time, liquor flowed freely. In earlier times when people of different villages met at a funeral, a spirit of rivalry was shown in the improvising and chanting of the poems and sometimes in other ways. I have in my possession an old bronze funeral drum, which was reputed to be the sweetest sounding drum in the hills at the head of Thonze Creek.[6] On its rim "dah" cuts appear which are the lasting marks of a fight in which rival groups of villagers engaged

[6] See Chapter XIII on Bronze Drums, pp. 121-122.

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Karen AP7

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long ago, because some of those present expressed a decided preference for the musical tones of this drum over those of other drums belonging to members of neighboring villages.

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Although many who took part in some of the old funeral celebrations were undoubtedly under the influence of liquor and in a corresponding state of hilarity, funerals do not seem to have become the occasion of feuds or even of drunken brawls. Young people came together on more intimate terms at funerals than was permitted at other times, and some of their poems would not bear reproduction in print. Probably at times their conduct also went beyond the bounds of propriety, but such lapses seem to have been rare and bitterly regretted. However, it is clear that Karen mourners succeeded in drowning their sorrow and believed that by means of their festivities they had sent the spirit of their dead rejoicing on its way to its future abode.

343 thefts from /216/ the grain sheds are extremely
778 rare (22).

[171] 22. T.C. Hodson reports this about the Naga, The Naga Tribes of Manipur (London, 1911), p. 42, in conjunction with McCulloch.

342 The crudely built bamboo house (Plate VII, 2) has in front a veranda which is reached by a steep ladder; the roof extends over the former (23).

23. A short remark about the Karenni house by A. Fischer, Zeitschrift für Ethnologie /Journal for Ethnology/, Vol. 35 (1903), pp. 991 ff.; the typical veranda of the house which has been reproduced here is completely damaged.

The occupants remain here during the daytime, and here the women keep their weaver's looms and spinning equipment; sometimes one of those
•[534] large bronze drums (pasi), which the literature mentions so often hang here. They belong to the most highly prized possessions of the Karen, and represent a very substantial barter element for the purchase of wives and similar transactions. The interior of the house contains only one room.
[354] In its center is the fireplace with a structure hanging over it. On a bamboo platform, which stands around the entire wall space, are dishes, baskets, etc. The sleeping accommodations, not separated from each other, are in the rear of the room. Ears of corn and millet spikes--the
[273] latter are used as an ingredient in the brewing
[251] of rice brandy, which plays an important part with all the mountain tribes and also the Shan-- hang from the roof rafters. In between, hang large pieces of pork.